

Duff Green to Andrew Jackson, July 18, 1827, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

DUFF GREEN TO JACKSON.

Washington, July 18, 1827.

. . . . By a note from Major Lee I find that there are some difficulties in the way of his examination of your papers necessary to the execution of the Work which he has undertaken. I regret this for many reasons but chiefly on account of the delay which it will produce in the publication of the work. More than 15 months ago I urged upon major Eaton the necessity of issuing a cheap edition of your biography and at that time understood that some important facts had been omitted in his work. it was not contemplated to do more at that time than to abridge his work. I urged upon him to undertake it. I was willing to undergo the risk of all expense incurred in the publication—but I had a greater object than any profits to arise from the publication. Your biography was necessary to a proper estimation of your public services which form as much a part of the history of the country as of your own life and are as essential to our public character as to a proper estimate of your claims to public gratitude. When I left him in Nashville he was at a loss and I understood him to say that he could not undertake the work. anxious to bring it out upon my arrival at Washington I saw major Lee and suggested to him the execution of the work, he immediately engaged to enter on it and we should have brought it out ere this had not the Secretary of War refused him access to your official Correspondence. I then wrote to major Lewis and it was upon the receipt of his letter that Major Lee resolved to go on to Nashville. Had I supposed that major Eaton desired to write out such a work I would have been the last man to interfere in any way; but supposing that we both concurred in the propriety of its being done, I fear that I have misunderstood his feelings and wishes

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and committed myself to major Lee under circumstances calculated to embarrass us all. Knowing that what I now write can have no influence in any determination he may make upon the subject this explanation is written as an apology to you for the trouble that Major Lee and myself have caused you. To major Eaton I am under obligations [for] kindness for which I shall be mindful and which [will] make his wishes on such an occasion my supreme [object.] I would not wound his feelings for any inducement and I [feel] that he knows me too well to suppose otherwise.¹

¹ Lee had a ready and efficient pen and, contrary to the idea expressed in this letter, he did not give up his design to write a life of Jackson. A part of the book was actually written and in a rather lengthy stay at the Hermitage in 1827–1828 Lee obtained a strong influence with Jackson. Later on the impression grew that he was mainly a Calhoun man and, seconded by Duff Green, he used his influence with Jackson in behalf of a Calhoun succession, and finally fell away from Jackson. See also p. 291, *ante*, note 1.

As to politics, I fear that I often do wrong, I shall however draw largely upon the forbearance and forgiveness of my political friends. they must substitute the will for the Deed and if I do err place it to any thing else than a want of zeal in the cause or attachment to you. You flatter me much in the estimate You are pleased to place on my exertions—my position does much, I wish I had talents and information suited to the emergency. I am truly gratified to find that all the attacks of your enemies recoil upon themselves.

Be pleased to tender my best wishes to Mrs Jackson and to mr and mrs. Donaldson, for yourself receive assurances of friendship from